



NEWS RELEASE

December 18, 2002

Las Cruces Agents witness shots fired in local housing area

Subjects Taken into custody for Illegal Use of Firearm

The success of Border Patrol operations in New Mexico communities is often measured by the volume of illegal immigrant apprehensions or drug smuggling arrests, but as in the case yesterday, public service took on a different meaning.

Two Border Patrol agents in an unmarked service vehicle traveling north on I-10 saw a passenger in a Chevy Monte Carlo extend a handgun out the passenger-side window and fire several rounds in the direction of dwellings near Mile Marker 153 just past Vado. Agents say three occupants were in the Monte Carlo when the shots were fired at approximately 4:00 p.m.

Border Patrol agents followed the vehicle at a safe distance, and awaited backup from the New Mexico State Police Department.

"As law enforcement officers and members of the community, Border Patrol agents remain alert to violations of the law and have the training to take appropriate action," El Paso Sector Chief Patrol Agent Luis Barker said.

The agents followed the sedan until several units of the New Mexico State Police quickly arrived. The vehicle was stopped and officers took two males and one female into custody. The motive for the reckless gunplay by the occupants is unclear at this time.

A charge involving illegal use of firearms is pending. The case was turned over the New Mexico State Police Department in Las Cruces.

~ USBP ~